



**JONATHAN E. FIELDING, M.D., M.P.H.**  
Director and Health Officer

**CYNTHIA A. HARDING, M.P.H.**  
Chief Deputy Director

313 North Figueroa Street, Room 806  
Los Angeles, California 90012  
TEL (213) 240-8117 • FAX (213) 975-1273

[www.publichealth.lacounty.gov](http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov)



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April 7, 2014

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Jonathan E. Fielding, M.D., M.P.H. *Jonathan E. Fielding MD*  
Director and Health Officer

SUBJECT: **UPDATE ON INVASIVE MENINGOCOCCAL DISEASE AND VACCINATION  
RECOMMENDATIONS**

This is to provide you with an update on the actions the Department of Public Health (DPH) has taken to address vaccination for invasive meningococcal disease (IMD).

**Background**

On April 2, 2014, the Department of Public Health (DPH) released new recommendations for IMD vaccination after a recently-identified increase in cases among men who have sex with men (MSM), including those who are HIV-positive.

Based on consultation with the California Department of Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), DPH recommended the Meningococcal vaccine for both HIV-positive MSM (including men who may or may not identify as gay or bisexual) and MSM, regardless of HIV status, whose activities put them at higher risk.

DPH has confirmed a total of eight IMD cases in Los Angeles County in 2014. Of these eight cases, four cases were reported among MSM, including three men who were HIV-positive. There have been three deaths from IMD, all occurring among MSM, in 2014.

DPH has taken the following actions since the April 2, 2014 announcement, press release, and media outreach:

**Information for Community Partners**

DPH conducted outreach to community partners that work with gay and bisexual men and other MSM to answer questions and to provide information about the vaccination recommendations. A conference call was held on April 3, 2014 to discuss availability of vaccine, reimbursement for vaccinations, and to provide general information about IMD. DPH reiterated to community partners that payment for vaccine is available through the Ryan White Program for qualifying individuals who are HIV-positive and available at DPH clinics for all others who are uninsured.

**Information for Medical Providers**

DPH issued a health alert to the medical provider community about the IMD vaccination recommendations and requested that they be on alert for new IMD cases (attached). DPH also conducted outreach to the medical provider community on vaccine supply and billing practices.

**Vaccinations in County Clinics**

DPH scheduled special vaccination clinics with expanded weekday and weekend hours beginning April 3, 2014 at five DPH public health centers throughout the County (Hollywood/Wilshire, North Hollywood, Curtis Tucker, Pomona, and Martin Luther King, Jr.) for uninsured residents. As of this morning, DPH had provided vaccinations to just over 200 individuals through these clinics, with the heaviest uptake at the Hollywood/Wilshire and North Hollywood clinics. DPH will continue extended hours through April 11, 2014, and will assess vaccination demand to determine if additional outreach or extended hours are needed. In addition, the Department of Health Services (DHS) has offered vaccinations at their comprehensive health centers and Multi-Service Ambulatory Care Centers.

**Ensuring Vaccine Supply**

DPH has worked with community partners to ensure an adequate supply of vaccine. This included purchasing vaccine for Ryan White providers and community clinics as well as providing doses to the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department for the target population in the County's jail system.

**Patient Education**

DPH is working with community partners to identify how to best promote Meningococcal vaccination as part of routine care for gay and bisexual men and MSM at risk, including those who are HIV-positive.

**Interagency Coordination**

DPH has coordinated with the health departments of the cities of Long Beach and Pasadena on the vaccine recommendation and vaccine availability. DPH has also communicated with the California Department of Public Health and with Riverside County Public Health officials in advance of the upcoming White Party community event. In addition, DPH has provided information to 211 with a schedule of vaccination clinics.

DPH will continue to work with community and medical provider partners to promote vaccination, including broader community education efforts targeting large events such as upcoming lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender pride festivals.

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please let me know.

JEF:jb

Attachment

c: Chief Executive Officer  
County Counsel  
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors



**LAC DPH Health Alert**  
**Invasive Meningococcal Disease Update:**  
**New Vaccine Recommendations for Men who Have Sex with Men (MSM)**

**April 2, 2014**

*This message is intended for all primary care, emergency medicine, internal medicine, HIV specialists and infectious disease providers. Please distribute as appropriate.*

**Key communication**

- Four new cases of invasive meningococcal disease have occurred in men who have sex with men (MSM) since January 1, 2014
- LAC DPH is recommending meningococcal vaccine be offered to:
  - All HIV-positive MSM
  - All MSM, regardless of HIV status, who regularly have close or intimate contact with multiple partners or who seek partners through the use of digital applications ("apps"), particularly those who share cigarettes/marijuana or use illegal drugs.

**Situation**

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health is investigating a potential cluster of invasive meningococcal disease (IMD) among MSM. Since January 1, 2014 there have been a total of eight (8) IMD cases. Of these eight cases, four cases were reported among men who have sex with men, including three men who were HIV-positive. There have been three deaths, all occurring in MSM, two of whom were HIV-positive. In contrast to previous IMD investigations in 2012 and 2013, some commonalities were found among the 2014 MSM cases. Of the four IMD cases among MSM, three reported residence or socializing around the West Hollywood and North Hollywood areas, and three were between 27- 28 years of age (the fourth case was 50 years of age).

Based on consultation with IMD experts at the California Department of Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), LAC DPH is recommending Meningococcal vaccine for both HIV-positive MSM (including men who may or may not identify as gay or bisexual) and HIV-negative MSM whose activities put them at higher risk.

**Actions requested of providers**

- ✓ Recommend meningitis vaccination to the following groups of MSM;
  - All HIV-positive MSM
  - All MSM, regardless of HIV status, who regularly have close or intimate contact with multiple partners or who seek partners through the use of digital applications ("apps"), particularly those who share cigarettes/marijuana or use illegal drugs.
- ✓ To increase vaccine uptake, Public Health requests that medical providers actively communicate with potentially at-risk patients about the need for meningococcal vaccination.
- ✓ Public Health encourages providers and health facilities that serve at-risk MSM to provide meningococcal vaccine to their patients. Patients may also go to <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/Mening.htm> for additional information regarding invasive meningococcal disease and vaccinations.

DPH will continue to monitor the epidemiology of IMD and update vaccine recommendations accordingly.

This Provider Health Alert was sent by Jeffrey D. Gunzenhauser, MD, MPH, Medical Director of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health.

Please email [hanhelp@ph.lacounty.gov](mailto:hanhelp@ph.lacounty.gov) if you wish to unsubscribe or need other HAN-related assistance.